

HOW WE CAN SAVE THE EXPERIENCE ECONOMY AMID THE CORONAVIRUS

An Ipsos Point of View

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GAME CHANGERS



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Although an effective coronavirus vaccine is on the horizon, the experience economy remains in danger. Even if emergency inoculations begin soon, authorities [cast doubt on their widespread availability](#) in 2021. Recent news of highly effective vaccines, coupled with the frightening rise in cases appears to have [reversed a trend](#) of declining enthusiasm for the vaccine in the U.S. but it remains to be seen how soon a critical mass of people will have access to, and received the vaccine.

This means that organizations that rely on in-person experiences like education, retail, restaurants, entertainment and travel, still [face significant challenges](#). Nearly three-fourths (72%) of American adults say they value experiences more than things, according to an October Ipsos U.S. Syndicated Online Community Survey. One thing has become clear over the course of the pandemic: Keeping the economy open relies on mass cooperation of health and safety and well-managed occupancy practices.

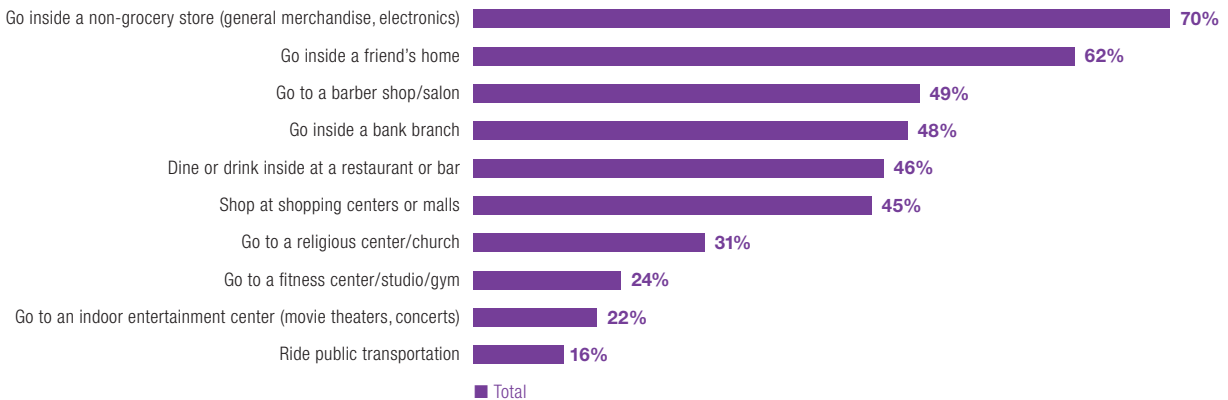
PEOPLE ARE EAGER TO HAVE (SAFE) EXPERIENCES

Ipsos research shows that businesses that already have executed such efforts have not only been able to keep operating, but also boost sales and customer loyalty. Six-in-ten Americans said they would stop shopping at a store that does not take health and safety seriously, according to Ipsos' Consumer Health and Safety Index. With winter and the holidays falling amid what may be the worst COVID-19 surge yet, shoppers to students are already showing concern about getting out and about.

A late September Ipsos survey asked how likely people were to do certain things in the next month. Just 16% said they would ride on public transportation. Less than one-quarter (22%) said they would go to an indoor entertainment center like theaters or concerts. Almost half said they would go to a salon or barber (49%) while 70% said they would go to a non-grocery store.

People aren't yet ready for the experience economy

In the next month, how likely are you to do the following?



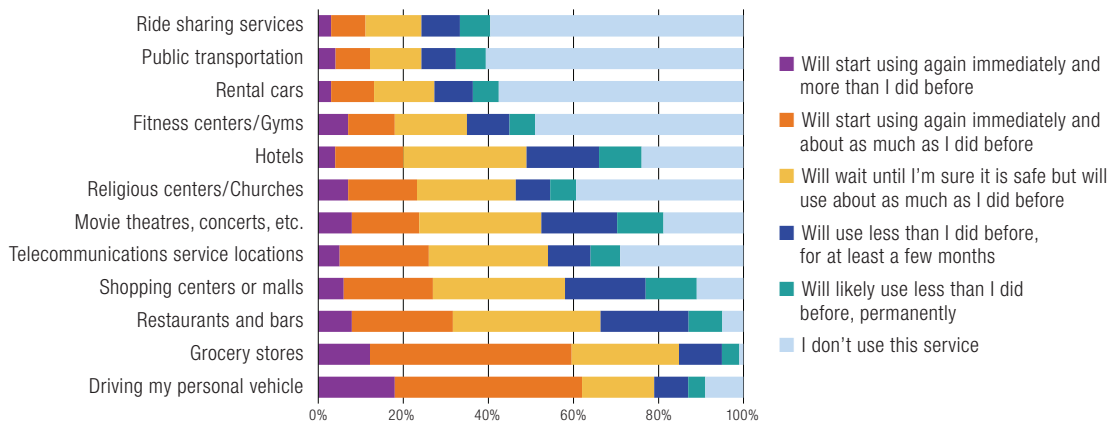
© Ipsos | (Source: Ipsos Coronavirus Consumer Tracker conducted September 29 – 30, 2020, among 1,115 U.S. adults.)

Yet, there is pent-up demand to return to normal. A late October Ipsos survey asked Americans how they would return to on-premise services after pandemic restrictions end.

Bars, restaurants and shopping venues topped the list of places they would revisit immediately, and as much or more than before the pandemic.

How ready people are to return depends on the activity

Thinking about when COVID-19-related closures and restrictions end, how will you proceed in using these services?



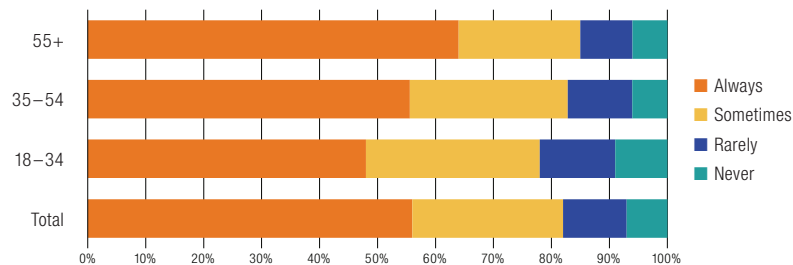
© Ipsos | (Source: Ipsos Coronavirus Consumer Tracker conducted August 4 – 5, 2020, among 1,111 U.S. adults.)

Both of these survey results point to people's confidence in their safety as a critical driver for in-person commerce and learning. Ipsos' Consumer Health & Safety Index shows that retail outlets that master health and safety requirements like wearing masks, social distancing, supplying hand sanitizers and on-site reminders can keep people (and sales) coming back. A home improvement retailer saw sales grow 135% in the second quarter alone after it implemented nationwide COVID-19 safety measures and financial support for its associates and communities.

Just 66% of American adults wear a mask at all times when leaving home, according to a late October Axios/Ipsos Poll. But only 47% keep a distance of six feet from other people. Moreover 82% think about how to prevent exposure to COVID-19 when they leave home, according to a mid-October Ipsos Coronavirus Consumer Tracker survey.

COVID-19 is always on their mind

When leaving your home, how often do you think about how to prevent a COVID-19 exposure or infection?



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With this in mind, there also is another potentially powerful tool to help organizations keep schools and experience-based businesses operating: occupancy tracking. This is where traffic

management tools are helpful to comply with space-capacity limits to ensure safety for all who enter buildings, facilities and campus centers.

AUTOMATED OCCUPANCY TRACKING FURTHER ENABLES SAFE EXPERIENCES

The Ipsos Social Distancing Live Occupancy Counter (SDLOC) constantly assesses foot traffic in and out of facilities and can be customized to specific requirements. Users can configure screen displays at the entrance to facilities, classrooms, restrooms and other high-traffic areas to immediately inform customers, students and staff whether it is safe to enter or to wait until others exit (because maximum occupancy has been reached). With the solution, they also can manage automatic door closures and locking systems to allow or restrict entrance to facilities and inner spaces based on preset threshold levels.

One large electronics retailer implemented the Ipsos Consumer Counting Solution during the second quarter of 2020. Its goal was to manage critical occupancy tracking and retail monitoring. These include dwell time, queuing patterns, adjusting site-level resourcing, product placement and optimizing traffic flow. Already these actionable insights have led to a recognizable improvement in overall store and brand performance.

Using occupancy along with other health and safety measures could be the difference for keeping organizations of the experience economy alive. Organizations that use them are better positioned to adjust and keep operating during what looks to be the harshest operating environment yet.

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